DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 319 018 CS 010 072

AUTHOR Huggins, Laura J.; Roos, Marie C.
TITLE The Shared Book Experience: An Alternative to the Basal Reading Approach.
PUB DATE 90
NOTE 19p.; Some lines of text may not be completely legible.
PUB TYPE Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055) -- Information Analyses (070)

EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS *Childrens Literature; Classroom Environment; Elementary Education; Instructional Effectiveness; *Reading Attitudes; *Reading Instruction; *Teaching Methods; *Whole Language Approach
IDENTIFIERS Educational Issues; Reading Motivation

ABSTRACT

There is considerable research evidence to suggest that (1) literature has a positive effect both on reading achievement and attitude toward reading; and (2) the use of a literature-based program is an effective alternative to the traditional basal reading approach. The majority of studies concluded that the literature-based approach produced higher reading achievement and fostered more positive attitudes toward reading than the basal-reading method. Children of all ability levels, given the opportunity to experience reading as a visual and thought process, take a more active role in their own learning. Students not only learn to read, they also develop a love for reading and become life-long readers through the process of using a literature-based approach. Research evidence also supports the use of a shared book experience. Most teachers are required to use a basal reading series. One literature-based, whole language-oriented basal series is "Impressions." "The Story Box in the Classroom" is a kit which provides numerous strategies for shared reading. In literature-based programs, the secret of success is creating the right learning environment, one in which a natural intimacy between teacher and children develops and one in which reading is pleasurable and meaningful. (Twenty-six references are attached.) (MG)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED319018

THE SHARED BOOK EXPERIENCE: AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE BASAL READING APPROACH

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

MARIE C. ROOS

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Laura J. Huggins
Marie C. Roos

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

Introduction

The present state of reading achievement, as indicated in recent reports and surveys at the national level, is not encouraging. The problem seems to stem from the quality of commercial reading programs which consist of workbooks, tests, and basal readers that have dominated the field of reading for years. Major challenges to the basal reading approach continue (Bader, Veatch, Eldredge, 1987).

One such challenge to the basal reading approach is a literature-based reading curriculum. In this regard, there is considerable research evidence to suggest: (a) that literature has a positive effect both on reading achievement and attitude toward reading; and (b) that the use of a literature-based program is an effective alternative to the traditional basal reading approach.

Cullinan (1987) found that students who were exposed to literature developed rich language because communication was subsequently modeled on words and phrases assimilated from literature. She noted that most children know the stories they like, have a "sense of story." Understanding story structure enables them to take a more active interest in literature used in the classroom. Of import as well is a teacher's enthusiasm about literature, a factor that is contagious. Exposure to lit-

CS010072

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

erature, therefore, have take many different sources.

Similarly, Janet Hickman (Frith & Roser, 1983), argues that teachers who show an interest in books usually talk about books they like. This in turn helps children become interested in them. Unfortunately however, the "skill load" imposed on teachers, often relegates good literature to use only in the time that is left after the basal reader has been "covered," despite the latter's containing very little text of high literary quality.

DeLapp (Hickman & Cullinan, 1989, p. 222) identified the essential features of an effective literature-based program:

1. Children are read to on a daily basis.
2. Children have time to read books of their own choosing.
3. Children discuss and reflect upon the books they read.
4. Children respond to books through writing, art, drama, music, and talk.
5. Children write on topics of their own choosing.
6. Children share their reading, writing, and art products with the entire class.
7. Children use a variety of good books as an essential part of any theme or unit of study
8. The daily schedule is flexible.

One aspect of a literature-based program is the shared book experience. Considerable research evidence exists which supports the theory that young children can learn to read naturally through a language arts program based on shared book experiences. In the process, young children learn to read as they interact with predictable literature, Big Books.

It is the purpose of this paper, therefore, to examine the current literature on the use of literature-based reading in-

struction in the primary grade classroom with particular emphasis on the shared book experience, one strategy used in this approach. Implications for the classroom are discussed and shared reading strategies are presented.

Review of Related Literature

Kenneth Goodman (1986, p. 358) stated: "The gap between the best knowledge in reading instruction and that represented in basal readers is actually widening." Numerous research studies support this view, that the wealth of contemporary children's literature in unabridged form, must be content for reading instruction. One such report was conducted by MacGlashan (1989) who reviewed research which supported the implementation of literature-based programs in the teaching of language arts. She suggested that educators should expose children to worthwhile literature in order to motivate them to want to read and to give them practice in the whole act of reading.

Manly (1988) examined the following: (a) the effects of traditional reading programs on children's attitudes toward reading instruction, and (b) the influence children's literature might have on such attitudes. She compiled 60 annotations of books and articles. This research efficaciously documented the need for the implementation of children's literature in the elementary curriculum. Further, he concluded that the exclusive use of the basal reader for reading instruction is a

narrow approach and does not lead to healthy attitudes toward reading.

In a similar article, Susan Partridge (1989, p.1) stated: "The practice of using basal readers as the main source of reading instruction has become a controversial issue in recent years." Several negative aspects regarding basal reading instruction were noted which included the following: (a) a focus on isolated skill development or abstract parts of the reading process, (b) a failure to recognize individual learning styles, and (c) a failure to emphasize reading for pleasure

Partridge recommended the following strategies for improved reading instruction: (a) using real books by real authors, (b) adapting teacher training to current knowledge on how children learn best, and (c) changing the current assessment of reading competence. Likewise, French and Elford (1986) noted that children's literature should have an integral place in the reading program. They contend that literature transcends the offering of the basal and establishes the connection of what real reading is all about.

Eldredge and Butterfield (1986) conducted a controlled study involving 1,149 second graders in 50 classrooms. In this study, the traditional basal reading approach was compared to five other experimental approaches to reading instruction, two of which used variations of a literature-based program. In the treatment, the first group, homogeneously grouped, used a basal reader with a special decoding program. The second group, het-

erogeneously grouped, used a basal reading approach. The third group, heterogeneously grouped, used a basal reader and a special decoding program. The fourth group was placed on a literature-only program. The fifth group used a literature program and was given special decoding instruction. A phonics test designed and validated by Eldredge, the Gates-MacGinite Reading Test, and a Pictorial Self Concept Scale, were used to collect data.

The analysis of data revealed that 14 of 20 significant differences among the instructional methods favored the literature approach used in conjunction with a series of special decoding lessons. They concluded that using literature to teach reading had a positive effect upon students' achievements and attitudes, much greater than that of the traditional methods used in this study. Heterogeneous grouping and special decoding instruction were positive factors as well. The reading attitudes of the children in the basal programs decreased, indicating that materials do have an impact on the achievement and attitude of the reader.

Anderson, (1985) summarized the research recommendations of the Commission of Reading, noted in Becoming a Nation of Readers. These include the following: (a) parents were urged to read to their children; (b) teachers were advised to spend more time on comprehension and less on skills; (c) students were advised to do more independent reading and writing and fewer workbook assignments; (d) basal readers should be upgraded and

supplemented with literature; (e) schools should maintain well-stocked and well-staffed libraries; (f) schools must foster a love of reading; and (g) schools should cultivate an atmosphere that supports reading by exposing children to good literature.

Analogously, Lehman and Crook (1989) noted that both effective schools' research and reading research support the view that more time in school should be devoted to reading literature. In most basal programs, too much emphasis is placed on the mechanics of reading. Poor readers often are more concerned with decoding rather than with comprehension. Children's literature, on the other hand, helps focus students' attention on comprehension, exposes them to the best written language, maximizes learning time, nurtures lifelong readers, and provides both pleasure and learning.

Much has been written in support of the use of literature in language arts instruction (Heald-Taylor, 1987a). Predictable literature, Heald-Taylor found, was particularly effective with beginning readers and slow learners. Similarly, Bridge, Winograd, and Haley (1983) investigated the effectiveness of using predictable materials for beginning reading instruction for slow learners. Sight word recognition and attitude toward reading were compared in the experimental group and in the control group of students. The findings revealed that children using predictable books were able to develop a sight vocabulary, which after repeated readings of the same books, could be transferred

to other works. The study also showed that children who use predictable materials rely more on context clues in their reading than do those who use conventional basal reading.

"Reading and Writing ought to be one of the most joyful and successful of human undertakings," noted Holdaway (1979, p.1), a leading proponent of the shared book experience. In The Foundations of Literacy, this author, documents the effectiveness of the shared book experience, a technique that provides a learning environment that is trusting, secure, exciting, and free from both competition and criticism. He investigated a literature-based developmental reading program known as a Shared Book Experience (Tunnell & Jacobs, 1989). In this study no grade level materials were used; instead, all word solving skills were taught in context during the shared book experience. The experimental group scored equal to or superior to other experimental and control groups on a number of measures, including Marie Clay's Diagnostic Survey. As a result of this research, which convincingly demonstrated the effectiveness of developmental programs such as the Shared Book Experience, these programs proliferate.

The Ohio Reading Recovery Program, a program of early intervention that was targeted at high risk beginning readers, is an American version of New Zealand's Reading Recovery program. After 30 or 40 hours of instruction, 90 percent of the students whose pretest scores were in the lowest 20 percent of their class caught up to the average of their class or above. Gains

were maintained and when compared to control groups, the Reading Recovery students not only made greater gains than the other high risk students who received no help, but they also made greater gains than the students who needed no help (Pinnell, 1986).

Combs (1987) conducted a study which focused on: (a) kindergarteners' responses to traditional reading instruction, and (b) modeled read-aloud strategies. The traditional approach emphasized enjoyment; the modeled approach focused on enjoyment while the teacher modeled aspects of the reading process, a modification of Holdaway's (1979) Shared Book Experience. Subjects showed significant differences in comprehension in the modeled approach: 94 percent after the modeled approach and 61 percent after the traditional approach. The study suggests that students of varying ability levels, given the opportunity to experience reading as a visual and thought process, take a more active interest in their own learning. Students were more enthusiastic about the books that had been modeled to them, their retellings, and their rereading than were students in the traditional reading group.

A study implementing a literature-based approach, incorporating interactive, whole class techniques with first graders was conducted by Trachenburg and Ferruga (1989). The book Corduroy by Don Freeman was read and reread, student's renditions of picture reading were audio-taped, and a transcript of the child's picture reading was made from the two most fluent rendi-

tions of the taped story. Pre and posttests (Comprehensive Tests of Basic Skills) provided convincing evidence of the success of this strategy. It was concluded that the collaboration as authors of a shared book improves children's reading and their self-concept.

Blyden (1988) investigated the experiences of teachers in a school for multihandicapped children that initiated a Story Reading Program using total communication and Holdaway's "Shared Book Experience" to improve students' language and reading skills. The findings were: (a) that there was an increase in children's attention skills, (b) there was improvement in receptive and expressive language use, (c) greater social interaction with peers and teachers, and (d) better reading performance. It was concluded that teachers could alter student behavior, foster language growth, and motivate poor and non-readers through the use of quality literature, that was shared between teacher and students and between students and students.

Big Books for Beginning Readers (1985), an exemplary program that was successfully implemented in 1984 at the Bell Gardens Elementary School in Bell Gardens, California, was based on Don Holdaway's "Shared Book Experience" concept. Bell Gardens Elementary School is located in an economically depressed area. Achievement data showed low reading levels for first and second grade students and needs assessment data revealed that teachers felt there were problems with the basal reading approach as used in their school. Two major concerns

were: (a) Teachers, as well as their students, reported frustration in using a total basal reading approach; and (b) Students needed more oral language development.

To remedy the problems targeted by Bell Garden's teachers, relevant research studies regarding reading were reviewed and classroom observations of reading instruction were made. After this was completed, it was concluded that the use of the program, "Big Books for Beginning Readers," would resolve this problem. In this program, oversized "Big Books" were used so that all students might see the words and follow the teacher who pointed to words during the reading. The teacher encouraged students to read along or to recite the often-repeated refrain that is typical of predictable books.

Attempts were made to recreate the "lap method" of reading since many of Bell Garden's students had never had the experience of having been read to at home. The "Big Books" program allowed the students the repetition of a favorite story which they had not received at home. Reading was done in a relaxed, non-threatening manner. Approximately, two weeks were spent on a story as opposed to the traditional method of teaching reading, in which students see a story only once or twice.

Trade books, smaller versions of the Big Book, were read in pairs. Audio tapes were available for those students who chose to follow along with them. Some of these teacher-made tapes directed students to echo-read pages and then to read the entire book aloud. Parents were involved in the program as

well. They assisted by making "Big Books" and reading with their children at home

Children were also encouraged to write their own books and stories related to the "Big Book" theme. Skills were introduced only after the children were familiar with the story. Then they were given sentence strips and sight words to match to the story text or to reconstruct the story, line by line.

An informal evaluation of this program was made at the end of the first year. Students' classroom behaviors were observed and "Big Book" lessons were compared with traditional basal reading methods. The results were the following: (a) Students using "Big Books" were enthusiastic about reading and were very eager to learn; (b) Non-readers felt a sense of accomplishment and had great pride in their ability to read the "Big Books"; (c) Students used picture clues more accurately than they did with basal reading stories; (d) Words of high interest were retained, although some were very difficult; (e) During sustained silent reading time, the trade book copies of "Big Books" were picked most of the time.

Gail Heald Taylor (1987b, p. 656-657) also advocated using shared reading procedures in the primary classroom. She listed the following elements of a shared reading program:

1. Teachers in concert with students choose quality literature.
2. Teachers read many literature selections to the children each day.
3. Teachers and children rewrite the literature into big books.
4. Students and children read the stories together.
5. The youngsters are encouraged to respond to the

selections through various interpretative follow-up activities and discussion.

In conclusion, she recommends that teachers of young children should develop skills in the following areas: (a) using the read-aloud process, (b) making big books, (c) guiding a shared reading session, and (d) developing interpretive activities to use in a balanced language arts program.

Summary

Recent research has demonstrated the effectiveness of using a literature-based approach to teaching reading. The majority of studies which compared the literature-based approach to the basal reading method concluded that the literature-based approach produced higher reading achievement and fostered more positive attitudes toward reading. Children of all ability levels, given the opportunity to experience reading as a visual and thought process, take a more active role in their own learning.

While the literature-based reading programs were found to be especially beneficial for beginning readers and high risk learners, these programs are effective for average and above-average students as well. There is considerable evidence to support the assumption that the literature-based approach to teaching reading is a highly successful alternative to reading instruction. Students not only learn to read, but they also develop a love for reading, and become life-long readers through

this process. There is considerable research evidence to support the use of a shared book experience as well.

Implications

Although major changes in how schools help children grow in literacy skills need to be made, a movement toward literature-based learning is taking place. Books and literature are taking center stage as teachers move toward more child-centered, wholistic classrooms. Teachers, supported by an abundance of research to corroborate this change, can confidently infuse literature-based reading strategies in the curriculum.

For example, David Cooper (1990, p. 40) stated: "Long and short term research shows that students in literature-based classrooms demonstrate above-average comprehension as well as strong reading skills." He believes that the key to success is quality literature.

Most teachers are required to use a basal reading series. It is encouraging that today's most competitive basal programs make use of a variety of good children's literature (Greenlaw, 1990). One such literature-based, whole language oriented series is Impressions, published by Holt, Rinehart, and Winston. Other publishers offer Big Book kits which include enlarged versions of predictable literature in unabridged form, trade books of the same story, and read-along tapes.

One kit, The Story Box in the Classroom, provides numerous strategies for shared reading. This program was designed

to make learning to read a pleasurable experience. The underlying philosophy of this material is that children learn to read by reading, an approach which has proven to be highly successful in New Zealand and in some classrooms in the United States as well. The implementation of the strategies spelled out in these phases allow teachers to select valuable literature to teach reading. Strategies and skills are taught, but not in the isolated manner in which they are taught in most basal reading programs. Because many teachers are required to use a basal reading series, kits such as The Story Box in the Classroom, enable teachers to use literature as a means of extending and transcending basal reading. The following teaching strategies are recommended for shared reading experiences in the primary classroom:

> Phase 1. Read a story. The teacher reads a story to the whole class or a group, showing delight in both the story line and the language. The story may be a new one or an old favorite. It is best to use an enlarged copy so that every child can see both the text and the pictures. The teacher uses a pointer so that the children can see exactly what he or she is reading. In this way the strategies of reading are demonstrated within a meaningful context. The teacher may then briefly question children about the story. This should be done in a relaxed, unpressured manner, giving time for spontaneous reactions and comments. Finally the teacher invites the children to join in a catchy refrain, a chant, or a repeated phrase. The emphasis is on reading for meaning and enjoyment. The model set by the teacher is vital.
>
> Phase 2. Read it again. After a day or two, the children are asked if they would like to hear an old favorite. The teacher then reads the story chosen by the children. Often the same story is read again and again. During the subsequent readings, there are opportunities for doing many things: (1) involving children naturally in anticipating both meaning and

vocabulary and in decoding some words in the text; (2) errorless repetition and reinforcement which breeds success and build confidence; (3) increased participation as the children be come more familiar with the story and thus more confident; (4) cloze activities which involve the children in predicting and problem-solving. The teacher can use flaps to cover a word, pause briefly, or use a masking device to focus attention on words or important letter clues. It is very important to take advantage of the teachable moment rather than stick rigidly to a preconceived lesson plan. Strategies and skills should be taught at the crucial moment of need--when they are clearly meaningful to the child.

Phase 3. Independent reading. In this phase the child reads and rereads the stories introduced during shared reading. The child chooses favorite books and reads them at his or her own pace during the many school hours made available for doing so.

Conclusions

The technique of using literature as a basis of reading instruction has proven to be successful in terms of measures of achievement and attitude. Research evidence supports the theory that literature-based classrooms create an environment that makes skill learning easier and more natural for all students.

Gail Heald-Taylor (1987b, p.656) stated that: "Literature is essential in any language arts program because it models the richest of language, sparks the imagination of the readers, introduces students to descriptive language and a sense of story, and intrinsically motivates them to read and write." Similarly, Morrow (1989) referred to children's literature as one of the most important instructional materials to develop literacy and lifelong reading habits.

In literature-based program, such as the Shared Reading Experience, the secret of success is creating the right learning environment, one in which a natural intimacy between teacher and children develops and one in which reading is pleasurable and meaningful. Research evidence convincingly supports literature-based programs to develop early literacy.

References

Anderson, R. C. et al. (1985). Becoming a nation of readers: The report of the commission on reading. Urbana, IL: The Center for the Study of Reading.

Bader, L., Veatch, J., & Eldredge, J. (1987). Trade books or basal readers. Reading Improvement, 25, 62-67.

Blyden, A. (1988). Shared story reading for severely handicapped learners. Reading Improvement, 25, 67-70.

Bridge, C., Winograd, P & Haley, D. (1983). Using predictable materials vs. preprimers to teach beginning sight words. The Reading Teacher, 36, 884-891.

Butler, A. (1984). The story box in the classroom. New Zealand: Shorland Publications.

Combs, M. (1987). Modeling the reading process with enlarged texts. The Reading Teacher, 24(4), 422-426.

Cooper, D. (1990). The proof of the pudding. Learning, April, p.40-42.

Cullinan, B. E. (Ed.). (1987). Children's Literature in the Reading Program. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Eldredge, J., & Butterfield, D. (1986). Alternatives to traditional reading instruction. The Reading Teacher, 40, 32-37.

French, M. P. & Elford, S. J. (1986). Literature and reading. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 273 933)

Goodman, K. (1986). Basal readers: A call for action. Language Arts, 63, 358-363.

Greenlaw, M. (1990). The basal's new clothes. Learning, 33-36.

Heald-Taylor, G. (1987a). Predictable literature selections and activities for language arts instruction. The Reading Teacher, 41, 6-12.

Heald-Taylor, G. (1987b). How to use predictable books for the K-2 language arts instruction. The Reading Teacher, 40, 656-661.

Hewitt, A, & Roos, M. C. (in press). Thematic-based literature throughout the curriculum. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service)

Hickman, J & Cullinan, B. E. (Ed.). (1989) Children's Literature in the Classroom: Weaving Charlotte's Web. Needham Heights, MA: Christopher-Gordon Pub., Inc.

Holdaway, D. (1979). The foundations of literacy. Sydney: Ashton Scholastic.

Lehman, B., & Crook, P. (1988) Effective school's research and excellence in reading: A rationale for children's literature in the curriculum. Childhood Education, 64, 235-242.
teners

MacGlashan, I. (1989). What research says about children's literature and reading achievement (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 304 685)

Manley, L. S. (1988). Incorporating children's literature into the elementary school reading and language arts curriculum: An annotated bibliography Report No. CS 211 668). South Bend: Indiana University. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 302 853)

Montebello Unified School District, California (1985). Big books for beginning readers (Report NO. CS 008 970). Bell Gardens, CA. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 288 185)

Morrow, L. K. (1989). Literacy development in the early years. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Partridge, S. (1989). Basal readers or "real books": A discussion. (Report No. CS 009 516). (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 303 777)

Pinnell, G. S. (1986) Reading recovery in Ohio 1985-1986: Final report." Technical Report, The Ohio State University, Columbus, OH.

Trachtenburg, P. & Ferruggia, A. (1989). Big books from little voices: Reaching high risk beginning readers. The Reading Teacher, 42(4), 284-289.

Tunnell, M & Jacobs, J. (1989). Using "real books: Research findings on literature-based reading instruction. The Reading Teacher, 42(7), 470-474.